



Indian Health Service

IHS-003-2000

March 1, 2000

# STATEMENT

Contact: (301) 443-3593, FAX (301) 443-0507

<http://www.ihs.gov>

## Indian Health Service Responds to Grandmother's Concern

(Statement from the Indian Health Service)

The Indian Health Service (IHS) has received inquiries from a number of American Indians generated by a news release issued by a private company questioning the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) that a new pneumococcal childhood vaccine recommended for children under 2, also be included in the childhood immunization schedule for children 24-59 months who are in at risk populations, such as American Indian children. The release also claimed that administering the vaccine "is likely to have the effect of genocide."

"I have grandchildren," one inquiry said, "is there cause to be concerned about what is in this article?"

"Sensational statements have the potential of promoting unnecessary fears and take advantage of real concerns and sensitivity. A tragic result would be for parents and grandparents to make a decision based on a news release without also checking with their doctor or getting additional information," said Dr. Kermit Smith, chief medical officer for the IHS. "There is a wealth of information and research data that should be considered regarding the issue of the safety of vaccines and when vaccines should be administered. The overwhelming evidence is that the vaccine is safe and using it is the best medical practice for our children."

The ACIP recently recommended to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that a new pneumococcal childhood vaccine recently approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) be included in the childhood immunization schedule. The ACIP recommended that the vaccine be added to the schedule for all children under the age of 2 and for children between 24 and 59 months old who are at highest risk of infection, including those with certain illness (sickle cell anemia, HIV infection, chronic lung or heart disease) and those who are African American, American Indians and Alaska Natives. The CDC is now considering these ACIP recommendations.

Vaccine recommendations are made so that those at greatest risk of disease will be protected. ACIP recommendations for pneumococcal conjugate vaccine among persons between 2 and 5 years include certain racial or ethnic groups because pneumococcal disease (which includes meningitis, bloodstream infections, middle ear infections and pneumonia) is more common among these children than among other groups. The ACIP also recommended that health care providers consider administering the vaccine to other children between 2 and 5 years who are at increased risk of pneumococcal infections: children who are in group day care, those who have had frequent or complicated episodes of ear infections, or children who are socially or economically disadvantaged.

Additional information can be found on the Internet at the CDC website at: <http://www.cdc.gov/nip/vacsafe/>. The CDC website at: <http://www.cdc.gov/nip/vacsafe/vaccinesafety/sideeffects/diabetes.htm> also provides information specific to whether there is a link between vaccines and the development of diabetes. Information is also available from the FDA news release about the new vaccine at: <http://www.fda.gov/bbs/topics/NEWS/NEW00716.html>.

***The following links are provided as a service to our readers. Links to these Internet sites do not indicate endorsement of these sites or their contents by the IHS.***

Additional information regarding diabetes and whether there is a link to vaccinations is available at "Ask the Diabetes Team" at [http://www.childrenwithdiabetes.com/dteam/1999-07/d\\_0d\\_3xo.htm](http://www.childrenwithdiabetes.com/dteam/1999-07/d_0d_3xo.htm). A research article on the association between diabetes and vaccination is available at: <http://www.bmj.com/cgi/content/full/318/7192/1169>.